

PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD
Wednesday, October 28, 2009
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
615 WILLOW AVENUE

MINUTES

Members Present – Mina Amundsen, Martha Armstrong, Dick Coogan, Rick Couture, John Gutenberger, Dave Herrick, Dooley Kiefer (Associate), Pam Mackesey, Peter Penniman, Monika Roth, John Spence, Andy Zepp

Members Excused -- Fernando de Aragon, Gay Nicholson, Scott Whitham, Fred Wilcox

Others Present – Joan Jurkowich (Planning Dept.), Jeanne Leccese (TCPD), Ed Marx (Commissioner of Planning & PW), Kathy Wilsea (TCPD)

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 9:03 AM by the Vice Chair, Peter Penniman. There were no changes to the agenda.

Housing Fund Status Report – Jeanne Leccese reminded members that the Housing Fund is a collaborative effort of Tompkins County, Cornell University, and the City of Ithaca that began with a six-year commitment. The Oversight Committee began meeting in June, and they have addressed the Notice of Funding Availability and bylaws. A separate Application Review Committee is now ready to function, with seven members from area human services agencies, banks, and real estate businesses. A joint meeting was held last week. Once the NOFA is approved by the Oversight Committee, which is expected next week, there will be a public information meeting. The Housing Fund has two components: The Community Affordability Fund for developers, and the Housing Trust Fund to place land in trust with a not-for-profit agency and cover associated costs. The first round of applications from the NOFA will probably be due at the end of 2009, and another round in six months. Publicity will be arranged by Marcia Lynch, the County's Public Information Officer. Information will also be sent to all who have expressed interest, and will be available on the County's website with links from other websites. The formula for awarding points in the application was changed very slightly; the names of persons on the Application Review Committee will be posted.

Response to DEC on the Draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement on Gas Drilling – Joan Jurkowich announced staff members are reviewing the document. Local agencies that are drafting comments will be sharing information on 11/6. EMC and WRC also have gas drilling committees preparing comments. In terms of water resources, TCPD will probably comment on source of fracking water, treatment of flowback, and impact on drinking water supplies. The dsGEIS has local Health Departments providing response to drinking water complaints, then passing concerns on to DEC. The document is silent on staffing and administration.

Pam Mackesey announced the Council of Governments has arranged two public meetings: 11/5 on what is addressed in the dsGEIS, and 11/19 to gather citizens' comments, which will be forwarded to DEC. Dooley Kiefer noted Cooperative Extension is also sponsoring a series of meetings for the public. Andy Zepp said he met with some senior DEC staff to encourage a regional mitigation fund. He will share information on future discussions. Joan pointed out that some impacts might be in site-by-site review if they don't fall into the "generic" aspect of this document. Commenting agencies can put in their comments that specifics need to be addressed. Peter Penniman said he sees a gap between our concerns and the proposed rules. If DEC is not receptive, what else can be done? Joan suggested further communication with state legislators to point out those concerns. Pam Mackesey said this has a huge political impact, as the governor provided support prior to realization of the technical needs. She foresees litigation and lobbying. Ed Marx said development of the Marcellus Shale is part of the NYS Energy Plan. Downstate needs energy, so that may outweigh environmental impacts upstate. In the document, protection for the New York City watershed is different from the rest of the state. Dave Herrick asked about the basics of the response and what can be done to protect roads. TCPD staff have not met yet to begin drafting their response. Ed Marx said the County is considering how to protect

County Roads. The County Attorney is drafting a model local law for municipalities to consider. There are also emergency response issues.

Energy Efficiency District Status Report – Ed Marx reported a number of meetings have occurred since the article on this topic was in the Ithaca Journal. Tompkins County would use its bonding authority to fund improvements for energy efficiency. Payback would be through property taxes. Thus the improvements would be associated with the property instead of the owner. During development of the EGGE element of the Comp. Plan, many comments were made about short-term owners not being interested or willing to do improvements. This concept is designed to fill gaps between existing programs. The tax increase would be less than the savings on energy bills. Discussion is scheduled with Barbara Lifton on how this differs from existing NYS bills and how Tompkins County can proceed. The program would be self-sustaining in three to five years. In reply to questions, Ed said the comment period on the NYS Energy Plan closed two weeks ago; there is to be a revised Energy Code, with training provided. Peter noted that Federal lighting and appliance standards need to be updated.

Potential Action Items for the Comprehensive Plan Update – Joan Jurkovich explained the process. In order for an action item to be retained for the Comp. Plan, a lead agency must agree to pursue it. She encouraged members to provide ideas for lead agencies. In the newest draft of the action items, Joan pointed out some wording changes and combinations of items. PAB input and staff input were involved in development of the new list. This will go to PDEQ and a public input process, but the public input process will be different from the one used when the Comp. Plan was originally developed. There is no timeline yet.

John Gutenberger asked why the original first section, Regional Cooperation< is not included. Joan said there were either no comments or it is addressed elsewhere. John Spence said Better Housing for Tompkins County applied for housing rehabilitation grants and was denied. He has seen the rehab pot decline from \$45 million to \$20 million. Neighboring counties got some grants. He pointed out the need to document the condition of our housing stock, especially those over 30 years old. He will attend a proposal evaluation for their failed application on 11/9 and provide feedback. Pam noted the condition of rental housing in the City is poor. Ed pointed out the City has a separate process, as they are an entitlement community. The grant rounds for competitive communities can be a huge waste of staff energy, and he would prefer to have a clear bi-annual grant. Martha Robertson suggested that is another topic for discussion with Barbara Lifton. Martha asked if the Housing Strategy action item was dropped from the Comp Plan list. Joan said the model ordinances were completed, and she pointed out not all TCPD work plan items are in the Comp. Plan. John G. again raised the importance of mentioning regional cooperation, and it was agreed that continuing efforts will be specifically mentioned in the introductory text. No new element will be developed; Joan noted no new item got more than one vote. Dooley mentioned her no. 1 vote was for a Historic and Cultural Element and it is possible that PAB members who did not turn in any votes might support that. Joan said we can't reopen the process or it will never end.

Commissioner's Report – Ed Marx reported the EGGE Element of the Comp Plan won an award at the recent Upstate Association of Professional Planners conference. Ed served on a panel on energy at the conference, and felt our concepts were supported. Funding for advisory board support was returned to the County budget at the initiative of the Legislature. TCPD did not put in any over-target requests. This will have a low impact on PAB because we do not meet regularly. Martha Robertson pointed out the budget is not final yet. She expressed thanks for the administration services provided. Peter Penniman requested a summary at a future meeting on budget impacts.

Approval of Minutes from August 2009 – Draft minutes were moved by John Spence, seconded by Andy Zepp, and adopted without change by voice vote.

Announcements – Andy Zepp announced the Finger Lakes Land Trust partnered with the Town of Dryden on a park on Fall Creek. FLLT also established a trust of 140 acres on Coddington Road, and tomorrow will expand the Ellis Hollow Preserve by 40 acres. Andy said he works with twelve counties, and recognized Tompkins County Planning Department staff as the most supportive and innovative, saying they are head and shoulders

above the rest. John Gutenberger congratulated Mina Amundsen on the award for the recently completed Cornell University Campus Master Plan.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wilsea, Secretary
Tompkins County Planning Department

Minutes adopted by PAB on December 2, 2009.

Membership:

Mina Amundsen, At-Large
Martha Armstrong, Economic Dev.
Dick Coogan, Local Planning (non-urban)
Rick Couture, Education
Fernando deAragon, Transportation
John Gutenberger, Education
Dave Herrick, Facilities/Infrastructure
Dooley Kiefer, Associate Member

Pam Mackesey, Planning Committee
Gay Nicholson, At-Large
Peter Penniman, Business
Monika Roth, Agriculture
John Spence, Housing
Scott Whitham, Cultural & Historic Pres.
Fred Wilcox, Local Planning (urban)
Andy Zepp, Land Pres./Public Land Mgmt.